3 september 1999 • issue nine • version 5.2

piss clear

Black Rock City's only alternative newspaper

Rumor mill
No more opera!
Killer BM ideas
Newbie advice
Sassy garbage tips
No RV hookups?
Top 10 albums
...and much more!

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photography by Adrian Roberts

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3 september 1999
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4:00 and Venus,
Black Rock City,
Nevada

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Adrian Roberts

The 1999 *Piss Clear* staff, from left to right: Layne, Deidre, Adrian, Andrew, Stewart, and PF

adrian's rant

Okay, so we've been out here on the playa for a few days now and we here at *Piss Clear* have got just one question: What genius decided that Black Rock City should be located in a fucking wind tunnel? Hello? Didn't anyone realize that our fair city was going to be plopped right down in the middle of the narrowest section of the Black Rock Desert, allowing winds to speed up as they blow through town? Duh!

The good ol' days

Oh yes, how we long for the days when Black Rock City wasn't even a city at all. It was just a small town — a hamlet, really — located *way the hell out* in the middle of the playa. If you were off in your driving by just a few degrees, you could end up totally lost. It was kind of scary... but kind of cool.

But I need to stop *right now*. I hate it when Burning Man veterans pine for the old days like so many cranky old codgers. Because the fact remains that what has been lost in intimacy has been more than made up for in spectacle. I mean, back then there wasn't anywhere *near* the sheer volume of cool artwork and fabulous theme camps and unbridled bursting-at-the-seams creativity that exists this year, that's for sure. I mean, it's just massive, completely overwhelming.

So overwhelming that I don't even want to leave our RV. Well, okay, that's not really true. I just don't want to leave the RV until around 4 p.m. or so.

Yes, after seven years at Burning Man, I've finally figured it out: It's fucking hot during the day! Fuck that! So now I just lounge around all day, trying to catch up on what little sleep I can, and avoiding sunlight like the plague. This way, I can save all my energy for the night. Because let's face it: nighttime is when this town really comes alive.

Nighttime is the right time

Not unlike Las Vegas, Black Rock City is an ugly pit during the day, and a dazzling jewel at night. Especially from a distance.

Try this tonight: Ride your bike way out onto the open playa — I mean, really *really* far out, all the way to the trash fence. Then turn around. Gorgeous, isn't it? That long strip of colored lights that is Black Rock City. Every year I do this, and every year it becomes one of my favorite Burning Man moments

The trash fence

Adrian Roberts

— and this year, it's even better. Why? No moon. Just beautiful, twinkling Black Rock City — a city that we helped *build* — floating in an inky black sea of glittery stars. Like a fabulous space station on the edge of the galaxy. A party planet in the midst of the heavens. Simply breathtaking. Wow...

Okay, then the Ecstacy wears off and it's time to make sure no one has stolen my bike. And if there was ever a time to get your bike stolen, tomorrow night — Burn Night — is *it*.

It's yahoo time

This is the time when certain dark elements begin to creep into Black Rock City... the weekend warriors, the curiosity-seekers, the troublemakers, the Bridge-and-Tunnel crowd, the dudes who just want to party, the — dare I say it? — the locals. In short, the yahoos who *just don't get it*. Expect to see a *lot* more beer cans and trash over the next two days. It's not going to be pretty.

But then again, who can blame them for showing up? I mean, if you heard about this crazy party in the middle of the desert where strange naked people run around blowing stuff up, wouldn't *you* go? I mean, you're here now, aren't you? So stop your complaining.

Tell everyone that Burning Man *sucks!*

If you really don't want a bunch of morons coming to Burning Man, then we all — collectively — need to start *shutting the fuck up* about how cool Burning Man really is! Stop talking about Burning Man all the time. Stop spreading the word. If anyone asks, tell them it sucks. Tell them it was really lame this year, a total waste of money, and that you can't imagine why anyone would ever want to go. Make stuff up. Lie. Just do whatever you can to get people to stop coming here!

Don't worry, the smart ones will figure it out. As for everyone else, well, there's always Disneyland, right? Yeah, I thought so...

Anyway, with that said, we hope you enjoy this — the last *Piss Clear* issue of the millennium. Woo-hoo! And if you happen to see a cute, orange-and-blue-haired, femmed-out gender-morph riding around on a fuzzy orange 10-speed... well by all means, stop me and say hi! Until next year...

Adrian

Having fun with garbage!

by RITLIN SCOTT

Last year, as I left Black Rock City, I saw a most impressive art installation. Maybe you saw it too. It was just off the main road on the way out. The mixed-media design of metal, plastic, wood, and paper was simply breathtaking. At a mere first glance it had the appearance of an ordinary roadside trench overflowing with garbage, but upon closer inspection, a person could truly see the effort and attention to detail that went into the project.

survival tips

I woke up one of my friends and said, "Hey, look at that art installation! It looks just like garbage!"

"It's real garbage, you stupid jerk!," he screamed, then promptly went back to sleeping off the rest of the year.

Hmmm... So this got me thinking about the many types of inconsiderate assholes there are in this world, and how quick we are to judge them.

Lots of plastic buddies!

Adrian Roberts

Can we really get mad at people who have been conditioned since birth to recognize that trash is worthless and "dirty"? Who are we to judge people who, for their entire lives, have absolved themselves of their mess by merely removing it from their sight and making it someone else's problem? Don't we all do that everyday? Does anyone *really* think that a person can actually change over a weekend, and want to drive out of the desert with their stinky, wet Plastic Buddy (see *Playa Lingo*) riding shotgun?

So, in an effort to try to reduce the amount of name-calling and finger-pointing that now seems to be a traditional Monday morning ritual here in Black Rock City, I've written a few tips to help reduce your garbage burden. Hopefully, these will bring out the aesthetic value of your trash and inspire a garbage art installation of your own this year. But whatever you do with your trash, have fun with it!

Plastic water jugs can have a second life as decorative ground lanterns. Just cut a hole in the bottom and stick in a flashlight or glowstick. Be sure to add a little mud so it doesn't blow over.

Paper burns. Try it! It's fun! It makes a pretty, pretty flame. If you don't think you can handle it, find a trained professional.

Creating a central recycling bin for your camp makes a fun group project, plus makes it easy to get rid of half your trash in Reno.

Dried fruit and vegetable skins can be used to make decorative car top mosaics. Dried banana skin tarantula mobiles will dress up any campsite.

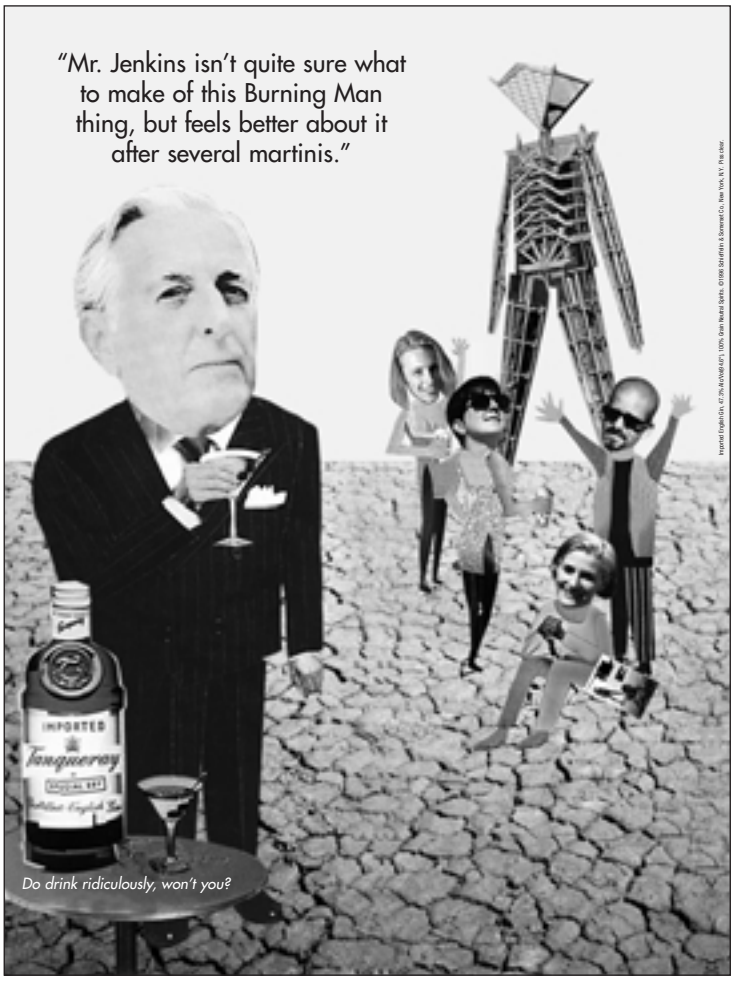
Wet garbage becomes dry garbage in a few hours under the hot Nevada sun.

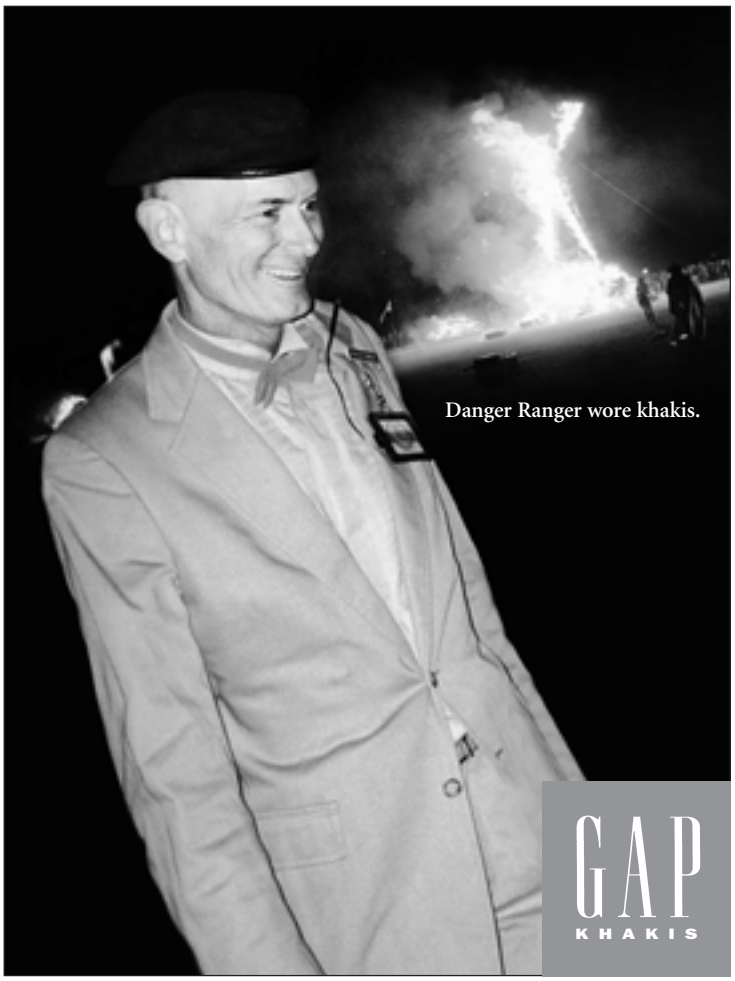
Baked beans, pea soup, and mustard all make great finger paints.

Used condoms make great balloon toys for all those feral children that wander through your camp.

If any stray dogs come into your camp and give you little presents, you can give them a little treat in exchange: chicken bone chew toys!

Wet garbage can make brilliant star bursts, especially when splattered against any television production van you might come across.


"Mr. Jenkins isn't quite sure what to make of this Burning Man thing, but feels better about it after several martinis."
IMPORTED
Tanqueray
Do drink ridiculously, won't you?



The Time Is Now!

by TERRANCE McKENZIE

last rant

What the hell kind of festival do you call this? A pigsty? A traffic accident? I was lead to believe so much about Burning Man, and from all I can tell, it seems like a rank-amateur production of *Oh, Calcutta!*

After reading about "Nevada's City of Art," I was intrigued by what seemed to me a truly unique and interesting art exhibition. I was also fascinated with the fact that 20,000 people could come to the middle of nowhere and make a city spring to life.

But now, I see the ugly truth about this charade. This Burning Man thing is nothing more than a cheap and dusty gimmick, and providing the basic elements of living seems foreign to the organizers. There isn't adequate security, amenities, waste disposal, or guided activities, save the actual Burn. We came here expecting the best, only to be served by a bunch of rank amateurs. Come on, at least have a concierge!

Make BM Winnebago-only!

Unlike our immediate neighbors, we came prepared. However, we're shocked, *shocked,* that are no hookups for our Winnebago — I mean, what if the septic tank overflowed? You can't explain these things to Whiffy, our Irish terrier. What if the battery dies? Perhaps my wife can't make a call on the Iridium phone. On top of that, the noise is unbearable. Hell, the way some people carry on, you'd think they had a cabaret license. Well, not in my neighborhood, mister!

And, as a side note, the Burning Man staff should beef up security, big time. It's only a matter of time before one of these munchkins takes a swipe at someone, and it'll be Kent State all over again. Why aren't there more cops?

I think, however, that there is hope in saving this festival — and the time is now! We must all work hard to clean up this hellhole and turn it into a place that you'd be proud to bring your grandkids. What's so wrong with giving everyone a good time, and maybe turning a buck or two? Make Burning Man Winnebago-only. That would keep out the riff-raff! Think about it.

The sun is your enemy!

by ERIN WATSON, CAMP SUNSCREEN

survival

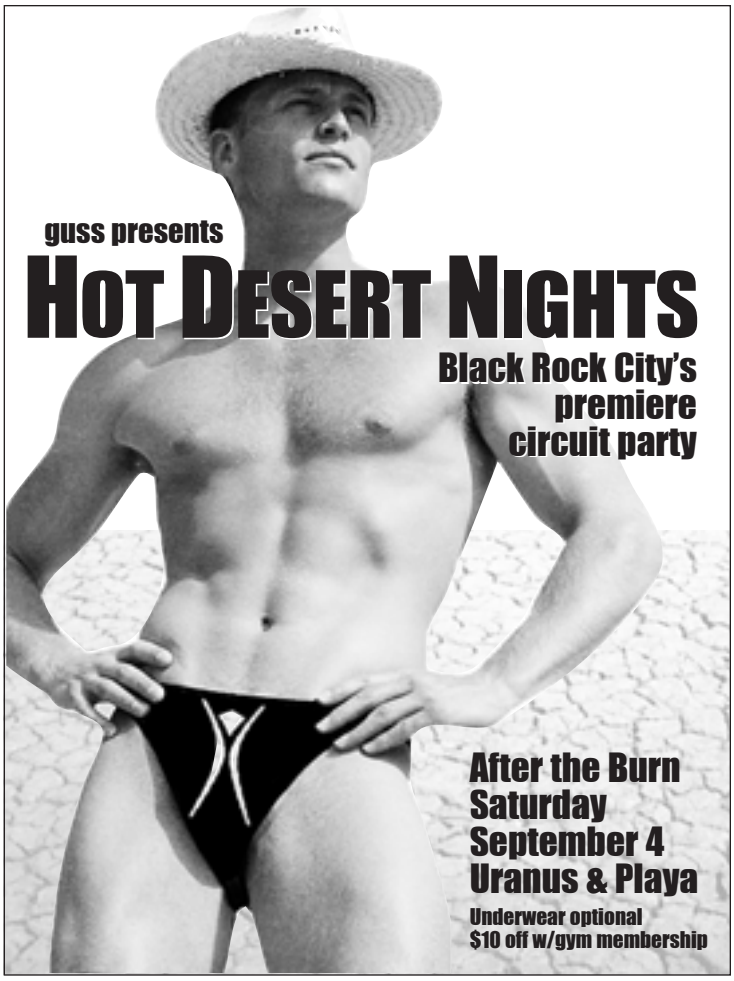
When applying sunscreen, most people put on less than half the required amount for effective protection. Don't skimp on your skin — apply liberally! At least one ounce should be used for arms, neck, shoulders, and face.

Sunscreen should be reapplied about two or three times a day.

Even waterproof sunscreens become less effective after you've sweat. A waterproof sunscreen with a listed SPF factor of 15 may only be as effective as an SPF 6 after sweating.

People tend to stay in the sun until they get burned, regardless of the SPF factor worn. Always be aware of how much sun you get.

Stop by Camp Sunscreen at 4:00 and Mercury to give or receive assistance applying sunscreen. If you have extra sunscreen to share with others, bring it by and we'll put it to good use!



FOR THE LAST TIME,
YES IT WAS BETTER FIVE YEARS AGO.
NOW JUST SHUT UP AND DRINK.
Enjoy Red Label Responsibly
JOHNNIE WALKER
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